

with Anthony Bacon at Bordeaux); then Burton, and Addison, and Sterne. His influence has crossed the Adanric as easily as the Channel, to mould Emerson and Thoreau. And in his own country, unlike Ronsard, he has never lost his place: admired as Tincomparable auteur de 'Fart de conferer' and detested as a pagan by Pascal; a still living friend for Madame de Lafayette and Madame du Deffand; a master for La Bruyere and La Rochefoucauld, for Montesquieu and Rousseau; the sceptic ancestor of Sainte-Beuve and Renan and Anatole France. He has appealed to men of all sorts and conditions.

*A peine trouverez-vous un gentilhomme de campagne', writes Huet (1630-1721) 'qui veuille se distinguer des preneurs de lievres, sans un Montaigne sur sa cheminee.'

Why? Partly because he dared to wear his heart—not a golden model, but his own natural one—on the sleeve of his dressing-gown. Many have tried to do that since. But Rousseau and Chateaubriand pose, like most of their fellow-autobiographers; the one in a white sheet with a bottle of vitriol underneath, the other in imperious purple. And yet nakedness is not everything. Pepys exposes himself still more completely than Montaigne, not realising that the world is watching; but he has not exerted a tithe of Montaigne's influence. He gives himself most charmingly away; but it is a simpler self and a smaller gift

Montaigne brings us a richer personality, a
subtler brain,
a more fascinating tongue; for he is three
things in one—
the unashamed Adam, but also the thinker
and, third,
the artist.

Yet if we ask what this thinker thought,
we shall find
that all his honesty and all his style have
failed to give the
world an unambiguous impression of what
he actually
believed. For some he has been the Sceptic;
for some, the
Epicurean. But it is better to avoid such
labels. They ate